

# Thomas Clausen

Feat. Tomas Franck, Jesper Lundgaard  
& Billy Hart

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## Blue Rain

Stunt Records



Stunt Records CD  
STUCD 15012



Thomas Clausen, Tomas Franck, Jesper Lundgaard and Billy Hart are all jazz stars. The first three mainly on the European firmament, while the legendary American drummer's light shines throughout most of the universe. This new group was on the road during the fall of 2014 and wrapped up their tour with a two-day recording session in Copenhagen. They brought the atmosphere from their intense concerts with them to the studio and played away. It was a hot session: All four musicians in the same room; no headphones, and exclusively first takes focusing on the improvisational art that is the heartbeat of jazz. In other words, a concert in the studio – that is how they wanted it, and that is how it was. These days, Thomas Clausen is one of the grand old men of Danish jazz, and an important pianist with a personal, powerful touch inspired by Bill Evans, European modernism and Brazilian music. His activities spread out in to many genres.

For quite a few years Thomas Clausen's musical attention has zoomed in on Brazilian music and tango, but on BLUE RAIN he turns to his first love, the melodic jazz with which he initially made his reputation via recordings with bassists Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen, Mads Vinding and Jesper Lundgaard; drummers Peter Danemo, Alex Riel and Aage Tanggaard, and a long list of visiting American musicians. Born in 1949, Thomas Clausen was around twenty when his professional career took off. He learned from the very best when, as part of a trio, he accompanied not only Gary Burton and Dexter Gordon, but many others of the most popular jazz artists of the day: Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Ben Webster, Joe Henderson, Johnny Griffin, Lee Konitz and Dizzy Gillespie. He became a cherished accompanist for soloists from far and near. His first recording was in 1973 with Jackie McLean and Gary Bartz, but even more important was his work with many of the trendsetting Danish bands of the '70s and '80s: Boone/Jædig Quintet, V8, Crème Fraîche Big Band and Entrance. In 1984 Clausen was the natural choice as pianist for the recording

of Palle Mikkelborg's composition AURA featuring Miles Davis. Over the years Thomas Clausen's impressive solo career has blossomed in breadth and unmistakable originality. He has worked in small and large formats, which is documented in many fine recordings ranging from solo and trios to large groups as well as orchestral music written for the Danish Radio Big Band, theater, choir and classical instrumentations.

This new quartet is a reunion for Thomas Clausen and Swedish (though 30-year resident of Denmark) tenor saxophonist Tomas Franck, who has always been - and still is - loyal to his musical starting point, the schools based on the playing of Dexter Gordon and John Coltrane. In the 1990's Thomas and Tomas worked together in Tomas Franck's quartet and in trumpeter Jens Winther's band. Tomas Franck is one of Scandinavia's leading saxophonists with numerous recordings under his belt.

BLUE RAIN also brings one of Denmark's leading bassists, Jesper Lundgaard together with Tomas Franck again. Lundgaard was part of Franck's trio from 2001-2003. Jesper has played with just about everybody – you name them; he's been there!

As a new challenge, Thomas invited one of the absolute top drummers in the world, Billy Hart. Hart worked with Herbie Hancock in the early '70s; later with Stan Getz, Niels Henning Ørsted Pedersen's trio, Quest, Dave Liebmann and numerous other artists – not to forget his own groups, which are now released on the ECM label. He is a good friend of Denmark and has recorded here several times with pianist Ben Besiakov, bassist Mads Vinding, saxophonist Jesper Thilo and most recently with tenor saxophonist Niels Vincentz.

Thomas Clausen put this super-group together to play a repertoire consisting mainly of his original compositions. The two exceptions are the lovely Ellington tune "Prelude To A Kiss" and a special bonus, the wonderful "Spring Is A Promise Of Fall" composed by Cecilia Heick, who sings the tune with the band on the album.

*Thomas Clausen (p), Tomas Franck (ts), Jesper Lundgaard (b), Billy Hart (d).*

*Leaves / Blue Rain / Punk Monk / Prelude To A Kiss / Prism / Things You Are / Spring Is A Promise Of Fall.*

*Thomas Clausen – Blue Rain, STUCD 15012, Stunt Records/Sundance Music ApS.*



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Sundance Music ApS Gothersgade 107 1123 Copenhagen K Denmark  
T: +45 3333 8720 www.sundance.dk sundance@sundance.dk